

GER:Martin J. Hillenbrand

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(Drafting Office and Others)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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Memorandum of Conversation

CATEGORY "A"

DATE: July 12, 1962

4:00 p.m.

Secretary's Office

SUBJECT: Germany and Berlin

Sensitive Designator

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PARTICIPANTS: Anatoli Dobrynin, Ambassador of the USSR
Georgi M. Kornienko, Counsellor of Soviet Embassy
The Secretary
Foy D. Kohler, Assistant Secretary
Martin J. Hillenbrand, Director, Office of German Affairs

COPIES TO:

After an initial exchange, Ambassador Dobrynin said he had been authorized to transmit a proposal along the following lines:

(1) The occupation regime in West Berlin will be abolished. During the initial years United Nations troops will be stationed there to act as guarantors of the independence and security of West Berlin.

(2) The status of these troops as guarantors acting in the name of the UN should be defined in a special agreement. They must not, either in whole or in part, represent this or that opposing military group. The troops would symbolize the determination of the parties to the agreement not to permit outside interference in the affairs and life of West Berlin's population. By their nature, these troops would be police formations and not combatant troops.

(3) The UN police military formations would be composed one-half of police military formations of the US, Great Britain and France and one-half of an equal proportion of contingents of troops of one or two neutral states, one or two states of the Warsaw Treaty (e.g. Poland and Czechoslovakia), and one or two small NATO states. The initial strength of the UN police military formations should not exceed the combined strength of the troops of the three powers stationed there as of July 1, 1962.

(4) Thereafter

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(4) Thereafter, the numerical strength of the UN police military formations in West Berlin will be decreased as follows: During the first year after abolition of the occupation status, reduction by twenty-five percent of initial strength; during the second year a further twenty-five percent; during the third year a further twenty-five percent; and by the end of the fourth year the remaining twenty-five percent, after which West Berlin will be free of the presence of foreign troops. The indicated gradual reduction in strength in UN formations will be carried out in the same proportions both with respect to the police military formations provided by the three powers and the formations provided by other states. After withdrawal of these police formations, the UN guarantees with respect to the independence of West Berlin, guarding the city from outside interference in its domestic affairs, should remain fully in force.

(5) With the abolition of occupation status West Berlin will be considered as an independent entity, i.e., a free city. Subversive activities against the GDR or other socialist countries must not be carried on from West Berlin.

(6) Any claims by the Federal Republic of Germany on West Berlin must be rejected as manifestations of the policy of aggression and revanchism.

(7) An appropriate agreement will be concluded on free access to and from West Berlin, with due respect to GDR sovereignty on the basis of generally established international practice. As already stated, the GDR will make appropriate commitments on this question. The Soviet Union again reaffirms that it has stood and continues to stand for unimpeded access, provided that respect is accorded to the lawful sovereign rights of the GDR.

(8) Differences or frictions relating to practical questions of access will be considered by a special temporary international body, - an arbitrator as to which the Soviet Union has already put forward appropriate proposals.

(9) Concomitant with the abolition of the occupation regime in West Berlin and the normalization of the situation there, other questions relating to the German peace settlement should be finally solved, as for example (a) fixing and juridically formalizing the existing borders of the German states, including the border between the GDR and FRG; (b) non-arming of the GDR and FRG with nuclear weapons (either directly, or through third countries, or through military-political groups in which they are participants); (c) due

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respect for GDR sovereignty; (d) conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the NATO and Warsaw Treaty organizations in one form or another. An understanding on these questions should be formalized in appropriate agreements.

(10) The agreement reached on appropriate questions will be reflected in the peace treaty which the Soviet Union and other interested states will conclude with the GDR.

The Secretary said that, on his recent visit to Europe, he had talked to the French, British and Germans as well as the NATO Council, on the German and Berlin question. In summary he might draw two general conclusions: (1) the United States and its Allies are in complete unity with respect to what we continue to describe as the vital interests of the West in the situation. One sign of this has been the recent identical response of all Governments to the proposal of Chairman Khrushchev for mixed troops in West Berlin of certain countries of the Warsaw and NATO organizations. There had been no consultation on this, but a vital point for the West is involved. (2) There was a real hope that these issues could be resolved by peaceful means and that, over time, the two sides could work into a more normal relationship.

One point which, the Secretary said, had not been discussed on his trip and which he would like to stress in view of certain remarks in Khrushchev's recent speech, was the fallacy of the idea that the US is in some sense a prisoner of West Germany and is merely parroting German views on the subject of Berlin. If one goes back to the discussions of last June between President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev, it is clear that we have been talking consistently about US vital interests, not borrowed interests. These are related to our interests in the security and peace of the West, and the consequences to these if our commitments to Berlin should be shown to be empty and meaningless. We are speaking for ourselves in this matter, and we hope there will be no misunderstanding on this point.

Ambassador Dobrynin asked whether the Secretary had any comments on the new Soviet proposals. The Secretary said he would not attempt to comment at length, but these proposals seemed to be merely a variation on the same point, with the same objective as previous formulae - the elimination of the Western presence in West Berlin. To use the US vernacular, the Soviet proposals were simply "not on".

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Looking back to the beginning of the Kennedy administration, the Secretary continued, we seem to be in a dilemma. The President came into office as one of the few young men in high position at the present time among the great powers. He was looking ahead for decades, taking a broad historical view. The Secretary observed parenthetically that, allowing for obviously unacceptable ideological points, he had found the wide historical range of Khrushchev's last speech in Moscow interesting. President Kennedy felt that there were two broad paths which might be followed: That of implacable hostility and inevitable catastrophe, and that of improved understanding leading to a more normal relationship. The latter was the one we should take.

As we have discussed Berlin, the Secretary went on, we have mentioned a number of points on which there seemed to be a possibility of agreement and which need not be troublesome. If, however, on the Soviet side these were put into a framework of some sort of stylized diplomatic technique, or regarded as signs of weakness, as compromises or concessions which were obtainable anyway if the Soviets just pressed hard enough, this created a dilemma for us. How can we proceed on the road to normalization when we are pressed on a point relative to which we cannot make concessions? On the one side we see points which could fall into place; on the other side we see the Soviets becoming more and more insistent on the point of Western troop presence.

Ambassador Dobrynin observed that the most recent Soviet proposals should be interesting. The Soviet Union obviously was trying to find a way out. It did not want a military catastrophe. However, it believed that the matter of occupation troops in West Berlin was a source of permanent danger in Europe which must be solved.

The Secretary said that the Soviets applied their formulae only to West Berlin. If they were willing to think in terms of Berlin as a whole, so that the confidence in our commitments to West Berlin would not be diminished, this could be talked about. But it put us on a slippery slope to confine the discussion to West Berlin, after saying that East Berlin and the GDR were not subject to discussion. Dobrynin questioned the Secretary's use of the expression "slippery slope". The Secretary said that, if the Soviets did not feel that it existed, they would not be pressing. Dobrynin said that this was not really the case.

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There was a brief discussion as to whether the Soviet expression "drawing a line" should be "under" or "through World War II" which concluded that either expression conveyed the meaning adequately. The Secretary commented that the Soviets have talked about drawing this line and the dangers in the Berlin situation. We simply did not understand what the Soviets had in mind. The danger actually had not appeared until the Soviets started pressing the vital interests of the West in West Berlin. What is the real content of drawing a line under World War II?

Dobrynin said that, after a war, must come peace, and this meant a peace treaty. If a peace treaty could not be had with both German States, then it should be had with one German State. West Berlin, which was in the middle of an existing German State, was a source of perpetual danger. Every day there were frictions and new incidents. These had to be stopped. Separately, perhaps, each issue was not so important, as for example, the recent humiliating treatment of Soviet citizens connected with the Soviet Tourist Agency, but the cumulative effect was. The presence of Western troops in West Berlin was the presence of NATO troops. The Secretary asked if the various troops around West Berlin were not also Warsaw Pact troops. Dobrynin said that this was not a real argument, since they were on East German territory. The mere presence of Western troops in West Berlin causes elements in West Germany and Berlin to act provocatively in a way which might lead to conflict. The Secretary asked whether the twenty Soviet divisions in East Germany did not have some influence on Ulbricht's attitude. Dobrynin did not respond directly, but said the Soviets had offered to withdraw their troops in old proposals. Coming back to those old proposals, this subject could be discussed.

Referring to the split of the city, the Secretary said that he could see the desire of the East Berliners to come over to West Berlin might have caused embarrassment, but the situation should be improved locally. Dobrynin asked why the West Berlin Senat had refused to come over and have talks with the East German authorities. The Secretary commented that the West Berlin authorities should talk with the authorities of East Berlin and not of the GDR, as he had proposed in their last conversation. Dobrynin said it was up to the Germans to do this; there had been no answer to the last proposal from the GDR. The Secretary said the contact should be

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between the city authorities. Dobrynin stated that East Berlin was the capital of the GDR and anyway this was not the real issue. The Secretary observed that, if Dobrynin were in West Berlin and listened to some of Ulbricht's speeches, he would not be very comfortable. Dobrynin said that he did not think that Ulbricht would be involved personally in any discussions with any West Berliners.

The Secretary asked when we could expect a response to our note of June 25. Dobrynin observed that it had been delivered in Moscow and he was not in the act. Up to the present he had received no indication of a reply.

After a number of other subjects had been discussed at this point, reported in separate memoranda of conversation, the Secretary returned to the subject of Berlin by inquiring as to whether there was any indication what Gromyko's attitude on Berlin was likely to be if a meeting took place at Geneva. Dobrynin said that he had the impression that the Soviet Foreign Minister would expect to discuss the newest Soviet proposal with the Secretary. Did the latter have something particular in mind on this or other questions? The Secretary observed that what we need is evidence of that sense of reciprocity about which he had previously spoken. The one-sided character of the talks on West Berlin on which the Soviets were insisting would not lead anywhere.

Dobrynin asked how long the Secretary expected to be in Geneva. The Secretary responded that this was a matter which he was holding a little open. If the Laos meetings began on Saturday, he might expect to arrive on Friday afternoon. If the signing took place on Monday he might stay on into Tuesday, but there was no specific limitation. In the article which he had written, the Secretary continued, he had suggested that he ought to stay at home. Dobrynin suggested that he take a copy along on his trip to refresh his memory. In response to the Secretary's query, Dobrynin said he was not aware when Gromyko was arriving. He did know that the Soviet Foreign Minister was looking forward to seeing the Secretary.

The Secretary said he did not know whether there was much point in going over with the Ambassador positions which had already been repeated over and over again. What we need is a real indication that our vital interests are recognized, not necessarily in a formal sense, but are understood as they exist in this situation. He did not know that there were any fresh arguments on either side, but he was concerned that, despite the fact we had tried to clarify

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our attitude and that of the West, the Soviet Government has again put its position on the public record, thus building up the prestige factor. This had been self-manufactured and we did not see much we could do about it. Making a public proposal as in Khrushchev's recent speech, which the Soviet Government knows does not fit our view of our vital interests, does not help to find an answer to the question.

Dobrynin commented that, in the last four or five months, the Soviet Union had put forward several proposals. The United States had put forward no proposals on the occupation regime question. The Soviet Union wanted to find a solution. If it did not, it would simply have signed the peace treaty. The Secretary observed that these so called "fresh" proposals are just a series of variations to reduce or eliminate our position in Berlin. Dobrynin again asked what the US proposals were. The Secretary responded that the Soviets know that, if they want forces in Berlin, they can have them in East Berlin. They also know that we think the presence of Western forces provided a stabilizing element in the situation. We had suggested a statement of principles to handle the fact of disagreement as well as to provide a forum for continuing discussion.

Dobrynin stated that an interesting stage had now been reached. Both sides knew the arguments of the other side very well. The time had come to find a solution, not merely to repeat well-known arguments. This required proposals in concrete terms. The Secretary commented that the Soviets surely did not expect us to make proposals to get ourselves out of West Berlin. Dobrynin said the US had made no proposals in the last year and a half. The Secretary observed that he thought the Soviet Ambassador underestimated the exchanges between the two Governments. We had made so many proposals that even Ulbricht had recently listed four or five points on which agreement had been reached. Dobrynin said he was thinking of the central issue. The Secretary went on to say that the only proposals the Soviets had made would reduce our position and enlarge the Soviet position. When the US tried to find a fair solution, or to improve its position, the Soviets said these matters were not to be discussed. In effect, they were in the bag.

Dobrynin said his Government still hoped that a way out could be found on the main and central issue, and that thereafter a solution of the German question as a whole could be found. The main issue is the abolition of occupation troops.

The Secretary

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The Secretary said that he would like to ask on what basis the Soviets considered that they had an interest in West Berlin except in terms of the occupation rights derived from the defeat from Nazi Germany. Dobrynin responded that his Government held that, 17 years after the war, troops must cease to have the status of occupation forces. The Secretary noted the Soviets were saying a great deal more than that the Western troops should be there on another basis than occupation. They are saying that the troops should not be there at all, or should share their position with Soviet troops or Warsaw Pact troops. Dobrynin said it was not a question of sharing possession but just of guaranteeing the status of West Berlin. West Berlin must be an independent entity. The question is how to guarantee this. The Western troops would not provide a good guarantee; they are already a source of friction. The guarantee provided by a UN troop presence would be better. Why could it not be accepted? The Secretary said there was no objection to a UN presence of some sort in Berlin, not just West Berlin. The Western forces are in fact surrounded by Ulbricht and his men (Dobrynin protested at this). We can not ourselves see how the freedom and security of the people of West Berlin can be maintained without the three Western Powers. If Ambassador Dobrynin were a West Berliner, he would feel the same way. Dobrynin commented that, if he were a responsible citizen of West Berlin, he would not want these troops which were a source of so much friction. The Secretary commented that the only case in the free world where we would find such unanimity as is found in elections in the Soviet Union would be a West Berlin vote on the continued presence of the Western powers. Dobrynin said that, if the UN troop question were put up to the population, he was not sure that it would not be supported. Mr. Kohler asked whether if the question were put to the vote the Soviets would accept the verdict of the West Berliners.

Dobrynin said he was not a Berliner. This was a matter in which the national interests of the Soviet Union were involved. The Soviets had not asked German permission when they came to Berlin, and they did not want the Germans to decide on a matter where their national interests were involved.

During a discussion which then ensued of the Common Market (reported in separate memorandum of conversation), Dobrynin asked about the future of US trade with the Soviet Union in view of Congressional attitudes. The Secretary observed that the prejudice of our policy favors trade. We are a trading nation, and we trade unless there is a reason not to. In his recent speech Khrushchev had referred to post-1946 military expenditures. He wished that there were some people in the Soviet Union assigned, perhaps as war-gamers, to the task

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of telling the Soviet leaders how Americans thought about things. In 1946 we had greatly reduced the US armed forces. Not a division or air unit was ready for combat. Our Defense budget was about 10 billion dollars. Now it is over four times that much. Why did this come about? It started with Soviet policies during the Stalinist period, the Greek experience, etc. The major jump had come at the time of the Korean war. If Khrushchev had not insisted on greatly reducing or eliminating our position in Berlin last summer, the subsequent increase in our forces would not have occurred. If Stalin had not pushed in his time, the US would be disarmed today for all practical purposes. Because of pressures on Berlin, we have strengthened our forces. The Soviets became alarmed and strengthened their forces, and all this in relation to Berlin.

The President would like to move on trade but people who are opposed to trade with the Soviets are nourished by pressures on Berlin.

The Secretary repeated that he hoped that Gromyko would come to Geneva with a basis on which a solution on some of these problems could be found. He noted that he had referred to the two different roads that the US and the Soviet Union could take. The choice of alternatives was extremely important. We wanted to improve our relations if possible. This was the President's view. If you removed from Khrushchev's recent speech the ideological elements, which we could not, of course, accept, there was an undertone of seriousness in what he said. His remarks about the diversion of resources to the arms race provided a basis on which we could agree.

The Secretary said he supposed Dobrynin had been a little surprised that he had been so moderate during his visit to Berlin. Dobrynin said that he had noticed this, and that the Secretary looked "very brave" in the "picture of him standing there". The Secretary observed that one thing that had surprised him, in returning by helicopter from the City Hall to the Airport, was the emptiness of East Berlin, not merely at the Wall but for a considerable distance behind it.

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